Proceedings of the Madras Government Public Works Department, 20th July 1863.

No. 472. Read the following letter from Captain F. J. MOBERLY, R. E., Superintending Engineer 8th Division, to Colonel W. I. BIRDWOOD, R. E., Secretary to Government, Department Public Works, dated Madura, 4th July 1863, No. 77 :—

SIR,

1. I have the honor to request that you will submit the following remarks for the early consideration and instructions of Government.

2. Before drawing them up, I have had the advantage of conversation with the Collector and late District Engineer Captain Payne, both have served in Tinnevelly as well as in Madura, and are well acquainted with the District; I have also the reports of the District Engineer Tinnevelly.

3. I find prevailing throughout the Division a feeling that our labour is very much thrown away by the delay in execution of nearly every work caused by the extreme scarcity of labor, in consequence of this delay, the incomplete work suffers from the weather, and has to be partly re-done, the cost of superintendence is increased and Estimates are insufficient.

4. It appears impossible to collect coolies from several works, and finish one at a time, as the Ryōts will only undertake to labour in the neighbourhood of their own villages; and they leave any work, on which they may be engaged, directly the weather induces them to commence cultivation.

5. The consequence is that all work is behind hand; roads are unfinished and not kept in order, as the maintenance allowance on the scale originally calculated cannot be spent.

6. Great inconvenience is caused, and the cost to Government eventually is as great, or greater than it would be, if a larger sum were allowed at once, and more liberal rates paid to the labouring population, other than those employed in cultivation, whose services are only occasionally procurable.

7. What amount it will be requisite to pay, I am not at this moment prepared to say. I believe it will be necessary to raise all the Estimates and allowances of the District 50 per cent., and if this is done we may induce a considerable proportion of the 50,000 men who last year went from Madura to Ceylon to remain and work in their native District. I have no return of the number that left Tinnevelly, but it is probable that an equal number emigrated from that District which is much nearer Ceylon.

8. These men are conveyed to Ceylon in Steamers, every arrangement being made for their comfort in transit. They receive advances which I am anxious in this Division to discontinue, are well paid, and lodged in Ceylon, while here they receive 2 to 2½ Annas a day and no shelter.

9. In my next Budget, I propose to submit only a few projects for new works, and to work at them steadily, if I can procure more coolies than are required for the maintenance of existing works; and to do this my Estimates must be considerably increased.

10. But in the meantime the communications are suffering, the District Officers are endeavouring to keep in order lines which were never fully made, and are doing very little beyond temporary benefit.

11. If the Government will allow me to use my discretion, in communication with the Collector, on raising the rates, and further funds are not available, I will do myself the honor of submitting a list of works which I think it will be better to give up, at least for a time, that we may with the funds thus procured make a better job of the rest.

No. 473. ORDER THEREON, 20th July 1863, No. 1,955.

1. The statements made by Captain Moberly are of too loose and general a description, and his proposal too vague to render it prudent to invest him with the discretionary authority which he asks for.

2. Before doing so it is necessary that further information should be afforded on the following points, and Captain Moberly will, in communication with the late District Engineers, furnish it with as little delay as practicable.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 20*th July* 1863.

3. It appears from paragraph 7 of Captain Moberly's letter that an increase of no less than 50 per cent. in the Estimates and allowances throughout the Tinnevelly and Madura Districts is necessary, in order to attract such a supply of labor as will suffice to carry out the works which have been sanctioned.

4. The Estimates for these works were prepared not many months since and the rates must then have been considered sufficient. To what extraordinary and unexpected circumstances is this remarkable rise due in so short a time? The Executive Engineers of Tinnevelly and Madura should be requested to explain this. The emigration to Ceylon has been established for years, and no increase which has taken place in it lately could have produced such an effect on the labor market.

5. If indeed such an increase in the rates be really necessary, which Government are very much inclined to doubt, Captain Moberly will be so good as to particularize the works which he proposes to suspend and to furnish revised Estimates for those which he has carried out.

(Signed) W. I. BIRDWOOD, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

Superintending Engr's Office
8th Divn Madura 4th July 1863

No. 77

From

Captain F. J. Moberly RE
Superintending Engineer 8th Division

To,

Colonel W. I Birdwood RE
Secretary to Government D PW

Public

Sir,

I have the honor to request that you will submit the following remarks for the early consideration and instructions of Government.

2. Before drawing them up, I have had the advantage of conversation with the Collector and late District Engineer, Captain Payne - both have served in Tinnevelly as well as in Madura, and are well acquainted with the District; I have also the reports of the District Engineer Tinnevelly.

3. I find prevailing throughout the Division a feeling that our labour is very much thrown away by the delay in execution of nearly every work caused by the extreme scarcity of labour - in consequence of this delay, the incomplete work suffers from the weather, and has to be partly redone, the cost of Superintendence is increased and Estimates are insufficient.

4. It appears impossible to collect coolies for several works, and finish one at a time, as the ryots will

will only undertake to labour in the neighbourhood of their own villages; and they leave any work, on which they may be engaged, directly the weather induces them to commence cultivation.

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every arrangement being made for their comfort in transit. They receive advances which I am anxious in this Division to discontinue, are well paid, and lodged in Ceylon - while here they receive 2 to 2½ annas a day and no shelter.

9 In my next Budget, I propose to submit only a few projects for new works, and to work at them steadily, if I can procure more coolies than are required for the maintenance of existing works; and to do this my Estimates must be considerably increased.

10 But in the meantime the communications are suffering - the District Officers are endeavouring to keep in order lines which were never fully made, and are doing very little beyond temporary benefit.

11 If the Government will allow me to use my discretion, in communication with the Collector, on raising the rates, and further funds are not available I will do myself the honor of submitting a list of works which I think it will be better to give up, at least for a time, that we may with the funds thus procured make a better job of the rest.

I have &c.

Supt'g Engr's Office 8th Dn.
Madura 4th July /63

[signature] Captain R.E.
Superintending Engineer 8th Division

To,
Colonel W. J. Birdwood R.E.
Secretary to Government D.P.W.

P. W. 1863 Deptt.
Pro. of Govt for July
No. 2483

From,
The Superintending Engr.
8th Division

To,
The Secretary to Governmt.
P. W.

Dated 4th }
Recd. 8th } July 1863.

Submits, for consideration certain remarks relative to the difficulty in procuring labour; & for reasons assigned requests permission for raising the rates of sanctioned works, the additional funds for the purpose being obtained by postponing the execution of certain works, a list of which will be submitted if required.

No. 1955 - 20th July.

No. 472 - 473

Public Works Departt.

Proceedings of the No. 1955. Madras Government
Under date the 20th July 1863

Read the following
from the Supg. Engr. 8th Divn.

78

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[initials]

To

8 The Supg Engr &c Dn 5 Dept 21st July

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P. W. 1863 Deptt

Pro: of Govt. for July

No. 1955

Pro: of the M Govt.

Dd 2th. July /63.

C No3900/63

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Superintending Engineer 8th Division requested to State the cause of the scarcity of labor in the Madura and Tinnevelly Districts & particularize the works which he proposes to suspend, and to furnish revised Estimates for those which he has carried out.

No. 472. 473